

What it is all about

Young Love Part 1: [A Schoolyard Love Story](#) and [Part 2: First Love's Shadow](#), are about the coming of age of Sean.

In the Young Love Romance Novel Series, Dean Amory chronicles the hero's life through the thrills, heartbreaks, joy and despair of the final years in high school and the consecutive transition to a labour environment.

Sean and Katherine fall in love the day they first meet. When the relationship becomes too serious, Katherine decides to put studies before love and breaks up. But she promises Sean she will return to him after they graduate.

Sean doesn't believe this is possible. After the traumatic end of the school year, Sean tries to move on with his life, but once back in school, both young people discover that it isn't easy to be in the same class with your ex.

After some time, Katherine invites him to reunite. Are second chances really possible? Can recreating the past help the young couple to create a different future? And is Sean even willing to accept Katherine's terms?

You can read all about it here:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/dean-amory/young-love-boxset/hardcover/product-22225740.html>

Portrait Of An Adolescent Boy



**Sean, Hero from Dean Amory's
YOUNG LOVE novels**

Adolescence and Falling In Love

Post published by Carl E Pickhardt Ph.D. in Surviving (Your Child's) Adolescence

When young people fall in love, what have they fallen into?

The answer is: into a depth of caring more complex and compelling than they have known before.

The majority of dating adolescents in high school do not fall in love. They don't experience in a single relationship that magical match that includes: sexual attraction, mutual enjoyment, emotional knowing, social compatibility, sensitive consideration, physical affection, friendship feeling, and romantic excitement all combining to create a sense of caring, commitment, and completeness that make the other person the only one for you. This experience is reserved for a comparative few, for no more than about 15 percent would be my guess.

Life changing is how "in-love" feels in adolescence because it is a far more moving and compelling relationship than the young people have known before. The experience is all consuming — so each is always on the other's mind. This is the person they want to spend all their time with — so time with good friends is often set aside. It is a merged relationship — so each one feels part of the other, not quite whole when they are not together. They are highly sensitized to each other — so both are alert to subtle interpersonal signals and are easily hurt by small slights from each other. The intimacy is deeper than with anyone else. Too feel so deeply known and deeply knowing makes other relationships seem shallower by comparison.

There can be a sense of a desperate attachment — so the joy of having each other is coupled with the fear of losing each other. And there are conflicts of a painful kind as they wrestle with issues of freedom and possessiveness, honesty and deception, trust and jealousy, togetherness and separateness, satisfaction and sacrifice.

It's important for parents to be mindful of these tensions in order to appreciate the complexity with which their son or daughter is dealing. In-love comes at a price of periodically being very unhappy when harmony is temporarily lost or obstacles are encountered.

Portrait Of A 17 Year Old Boy

Physical Description



Sean has a positive body image. He may not be the best looking boy of his class, but he is rather satisfied with the way he looks like. At 1m80, he is taller than most of his friends. Though of a slender built, weighing less than 70 kg, he is also strong and fast.

At 16, he started growing his hair longer than average and at the same time gradually changed to wearing more jeans instead of classic trousers.

Background



Sean grew up in a stable, harmonious, humble, large, Catholic family. His parents had moved to a rather grey suburb of Aalst, in order to live closer to the railway station from which his father commutes to Brussels, where he works at a bank.

Sean isn't particularly fond about the environment he grows up in. He feels he misses guidance, support, opportunities and challenges and considers his environment to be detrimental to his development.

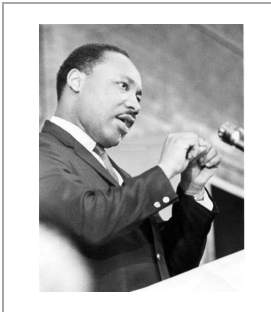
Personality Traits

Religion



Sean has lost his belief at a very young age, but has remained loyal to most catholic values and has developed strong ideas about what is right or wrong. He considers himself to be respectful of the rights of others, loving, faithful, peaceful and friendly. He is very much opposed to any form of oppression or abuse of authority.

Preferences



He loves to study languages, likes to talk about political issues and social causes, is very interested in history and will grab any possibility to travel or discover new environments.

Identity



He is very aware of his identity and loves feeling different from everybody else. He identifies with the image of a lone wolf. Hence, peer pressure has little effect on him.

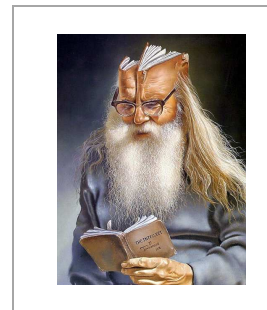
He feels recognized and somewhat important in his peer group because of his audacity, autonomy, intelligence, fluency and (supposed) success with the other sex.

Challenges



At the same time, he experiences difficulties in starting conversations and keeping them going, as well as in building relationships. He wants to care for people, and in an abstract way cares a lot for them, but when it comes to individual people, he's rarely interested in anybody and, when he is, even more rarely succeeds in building in depth contact.

Narcissism



He wrestles with both feeling of superiority (he thinks he's really smart) / and inferiority (at a social level). Self development with Sean follows a more or less balanced line between an idealizing line (you are great and I am part of you) and a grandiose line (I am great, and you admire me), at times nevertheless leading to doubts and hypersensitive feelings of failure.

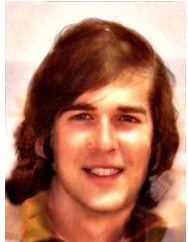
Contradictions



He feels limited in his possibility to go out with friends because of his constant lack of money. On the other hand, when he does have money, he does not spend in on going out with friends ...

He often theorizes about who and how he is and behaves, about what matters to him and how he wants to be, but in fact he does little to actually concretize his goals and live up to them.

Experimental Behaviour



He simultaneously tries out different ways of clothing fashion (jeans vs mixed colour). In the seventies, boys wearing long hair and jeans, would generally be described as "beatles" or "hippies".

In an attempt to better understand how others define themselves and who he really is, he searches for answers in conversations, listening to music and reading novels.

Identity - 2



He is unconventional, independent, rebellious and disorganized. He makes most decisions without parent input, barely studies and is always looking for attention.

His only drive is to enjoy himself and assure himself of the love of the girl(s) he loves. Nothing else in life seems to matter.

Both his parents and teachers are inclined to give up on him. As a consequence, already the level of attachment that he feels to parents and teachers is very low and his educational expectations very limited (since he was not allowed to continue his studies because of his "bad behaviour"), making it more probable that he would turn to other groups and deviant behaviour in search of acceptance and self-enhancement.

A low degree of attachment with parents and teachers also makes a young boy vulnerable to experiencing low self-esteem and is associated with depression.



The Future



He's worried about the future. Since he knows he's not allowed to start higher studies, he fears future will bring him nothing but boredom and frustration.

Passivity



Although he knows that he can force his parents to allow him to enlist for higher studies, he accepts their decision because he has no idea of which direction of studies to take, since he has no idea of what jobs are available and hence concludes nothing really interests him.

Mood / Self Esteem



As a rule, Sean is a positive, dynamic, enthusiast, extravert and confident person. This mood is rather stable and is not easily influenced by setbacks or observations from parents, teachers or friends.

However, failure to win or maintain the affection of the girls he cares for form the major contributor to periods of low self-esteem. Even a small critic or sign of rejection from such a person is all it takes to make him start worrying, make him uncertain about how to behave, make him doubt himself and make him feel depressed and melancholic. At such moments, he becomes passive, dark, sad and self destructive.

How Katherine sees him



What she likes about him: he is kind, self assured, fun loving, tender, intelligent, spontaneous, protective, respectful, handsome, caring, attentive and loyal.

Certain things about him, she does not like: he's confusing her: on one side, he thinks too much and is too serious. On the other side, he takes few things serious and seems to laugh at everything (rude).

Sean seems a good choice as a boyfriend because he is exciting, has original ideas, and comes across as someone who enjoys himself and takes initiative.

However, after she complains about his impolite and rude behaviour, Sean changes and becomes too heavy, too serious and often boring.

They become too isolated from the others and especially outside school, it's difficult to have fun together, which makes her decide to end the relationship.

To her surprise, as soon as she drops Sean, he becomes the popular boy again with whom she fell in love in the first place. It makes her jealous to see him enjoy life without her and she starts doubting whether she made the right decision. However, as soon as she turns to Sean again, he responds even more seriously than before, which makes her scramble back immediately.

Risk Taking



Sean smokes and he uses alcohol frequently but with moderation. He displays a number of antisocial traits, including stealing and frequent use of alcohol. He acts impulsively, undisciplined and uncontrolled, is attracted to excitement, and runs a much higher risk to engage in dangerous or risky behaviour than most of his fellow students, even though he doesn't easily feel challenged and resists negative peer pressure.

Organization



He has no defined goals. In fact, he is totally lacking initiative, purpose, structure, meaning and content in his life. He totally lacks long term goals and inevitably puts short term goals before long term goals when it comes to studying; even to a degree that he is losing the capacity to concentrate on schoolwork.

Friends



Sean is very egocentric. Whatever friends he has, he really considers them only as being acquaintances who are only in his life because he needs a place to hide from loneliness. He doesn't see them as a reference group and doesn't come emotionally involved in them. They merely serve as a social outlet. He rarely invites their opinion or advice and as a rule bothers little about their acceptance, which limits their impact on his thoughts, feelings and development.

Leader of the Pack



At school, he likes to feel the center of his own small "clique" at the schoolyard. The truth is that, - Without Katherine's help and the tolerance demonstrated by some teachers, he would have failed at the school exams, would probably have become a drop out and the ensuing blow to his feelings of self-worth and self esteem would have caused a major depression.

Nostalgic Romanticism



He remembers the high quality friendship he shared with his best friend during boyhood with some nostalgia and misses the presence of a real good friend in his life. Unexpectedly he finds a good friend in Rolf, the new steph son of an aunt. The fact that Rolf is German and lives in Germany, limits the possibilities of interaction.

Authority



He has a tendency of openly questioning and challenging school rules and teachers' behaviour and doesn't hesitate to take his protest to the school direction if he feels he's right.

The Opposite Sex



At 17, Sean has had a number of romantic relationships that lasted a couple of weeks and in some cases even several months.

The nature of these romantic relationships included: telling others they are in a relationship, meeting before and after school or at street corners during the holidays, going out together during the weekends, behaving as a couple in a group setting, holding hands, hugging, cuddling and kissing.

Until meeting Katherine, he's never had the feeling though that such a relationship could last for much longer than a couple of months.

He almost instantly differentiates between superficial and (potentially) meaningful relationships. Whereas he won't even start to commit himself emotionally in the first case, whenever he really cares about a girl, he tends to completely neglect old friendships and organize his life entirely in function of the new relationship.

The reason that he invariably takes meaningful relationships very seriously from the beginning is that he only feels really good when he is in love.

He needs a girlfriend to cheer him up, and easily sinks into a depressed mood without their support. He has a strong tendency for co-dependent behaviour.

Relations with Parents and Siblings



During the early years of puberty, Sean has asserted himself rather forcefully. By the age of sixteen, has won all important battles at home, where he has become an accidental visitor who doesn't really participate in family life or contribute to household chores. He acts very independently and comes and goes more or less as he pleases.

He loves his parents and shares many of their values, but does not share their religion, nor their opinions about how and where to spend his free time.

Because he almost doesn't study at all and words don't seem to have any impact on him, his parents refuse to allow him to continue his studies after high school.

He sustains positive sibling relations and is aware of the fact that his behaviour is an example to younger siblings. Due to the fact that the siblings in his own age category are all girls, and that they do not share his interest in going out, he feels they are living in different worlds, which limits their influence on each other's lives.

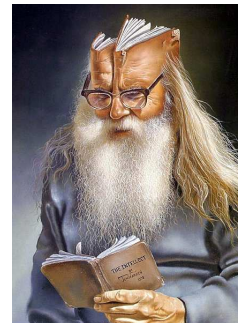
Leisure Time



Sean doesn't participate in any organized leisure activities. He spends most of his free time visiting friends to socialize, listen to music or watch TV. During the weekends he can be found in town, visiting bars and dancing halls, mostly on his own.

Occasionally he will go shopping with friends (e.g. for books, records or clothes) or he will take his younger siblings for a walk or spend half a day running through fields and meadows with his grandparents' dog. .

Culture



Like with most adolescents, music is important to Sean. He's a fan of the Creedence Clearwater Revival because, in the early seventies, he experiences their bayou rock style music as new and appealing. Apart from the CCR, he has hundreds of favourite music works in a wide variety of styles and languages, including classic music, folk, rock, pop, schlager, etc...

Sean loves to read. In fact, when bored during the lessons, rather than disturbing the lessons, he spends his time reading novels. Also, when going out he often takes a novel with him to fill the lonely hours. After having read local authors for some time, he switched to reading English and American authors, selecting his books more based on the author's fame than on the book's subject.

Culture - 2



He also loves watching paintings and statues. Whenever there is a free exhibition in town, he will walk in and spend some time admiring the exposed works. Often however he will leave the exposition hall disappointed because of the low level of connection experienced.

Although in his family, there is a tradition of going to the movies, when he gets to know Rudy, he discovers that until that moment he has been missing all the movies that really matter.

Together with Rudy he will also attend a number of concerts of popular world singers and groups for the first time in his life.

Other cultures exercise a strong attraction upon Sean. He loves working with tourists during the summer holidays, takes evening courses Spanish and grabs each opportunity to travel abroad. When he feels depressed after finishing high school, his first idea is to emigrate to Canada, Australia or South Africa.

Behaviour



When Katherine complains about his rude and impolite behaviour, he decides he does not want to be that kind of person and tries to change his self presentation adapting a more accommodating, lenient and friendly personality style. When the class organizes a "mister congeniality poll", Sean is selected as the most friendly boy of the class community.

Young Love



Nobody is ever perfect or one dimensional: people are complex and flawed; they make mistakes and often even behave in illogic and contradictory ways. They learn and grow through their experiences.

Young Love is about relations that fail because the main characters, though of the same age, have different priorities and ideas about what it is like to be young. Young Love is not just about Sean and Katherine however not just about a failed relationship, or the gradual descent into depression when their relationship changes into a holding pattern. It's mainly about Sean's coming of age : how he learns to deal with a failed relationship and move on with his life without blaming Katherine, others or even himself; and about how his experiences force him to look inside for answers and learn that it's ok to accept that some decisions are a consequence of elements that are outside his own circle of influence.

Young Love is about the uncertainties and overpowering emotions that come with true young love. It's about the sweetness of young love, but also about the anguish of regret, the sadness of time and energy lost, the importance of open communication and trust. It depicts the heroes psychological struggle in a honest and genuine way.

Two books about growing up, new beginnings, recognizing that our limitations are definitely outweighed by our strengths



Personally, I would describe Young Life as a set of stories about overcoming life events and experiencing the wondrous realization of how strong human nature actually is. Young Life is about rediscovering hope, falling in love, and learning to love life. These books are about growing up, new beginnings, recognizing that although we do have limitations these are definitely outweighed by our strengths. In a world seemingly without a cure, there is always hope in one form or another, but it just takes a little time to learn that.

There is something endearing, fresh, compelling and innocent about young love that makes it irresistible. Stories about young love are open minded, unpretentious, have a strong sense of hope, and take us to a period in life where nothing is definitive yet: imagination still reigns and cynicism isn't present yet.

The first cut is the deepest. Because romance is about a time in life when our life is filled with new emotions, new perspectives, new dreams and new experiences. Because they are new, they are felt more intense, and also the drama is more intense. At a young age, we still have this capacity to love unconditionally.

Every decision in this phase of life still has the potential of creating a totally different future.

Since the theme is universal, we can draw from what is happening and learn how to conquer problems in our own life.



In considering the possible consequences of the main characters' decisions, we enter a world with new morals and new choices that invite us to consider applying them to our own daily actions. Since the theme is universal, we can draw from what is happening in the story and learn from the characters' behaviour and growth how to conquer problems in our own life.

When Katherine breaks up with Sean and yet claims she loves him and appeals to his feelings for her every time he tries to move on, Sean doesn't know how to react. The longer the two turn in circles around each other, the more bitter and emotionally crippled both become. Sean feels small, limited, worthless, unfit for this world and incapable to build and maintain balanced and satisfying relationships, and basically, the same is true for Katherine.

Until Sean met Katherine, his life had been very much like the ocean: idyllic and peaceful at some times, dangerous and hostile at other times; but always something basically unpredictable in which boring periods alternated with exciting moments in spite of himself. Life was something mysterious that he tried to accept for what it was, without ruminating too much about what he expected from it or how he could get the best of it. Things were what they were and so was he.

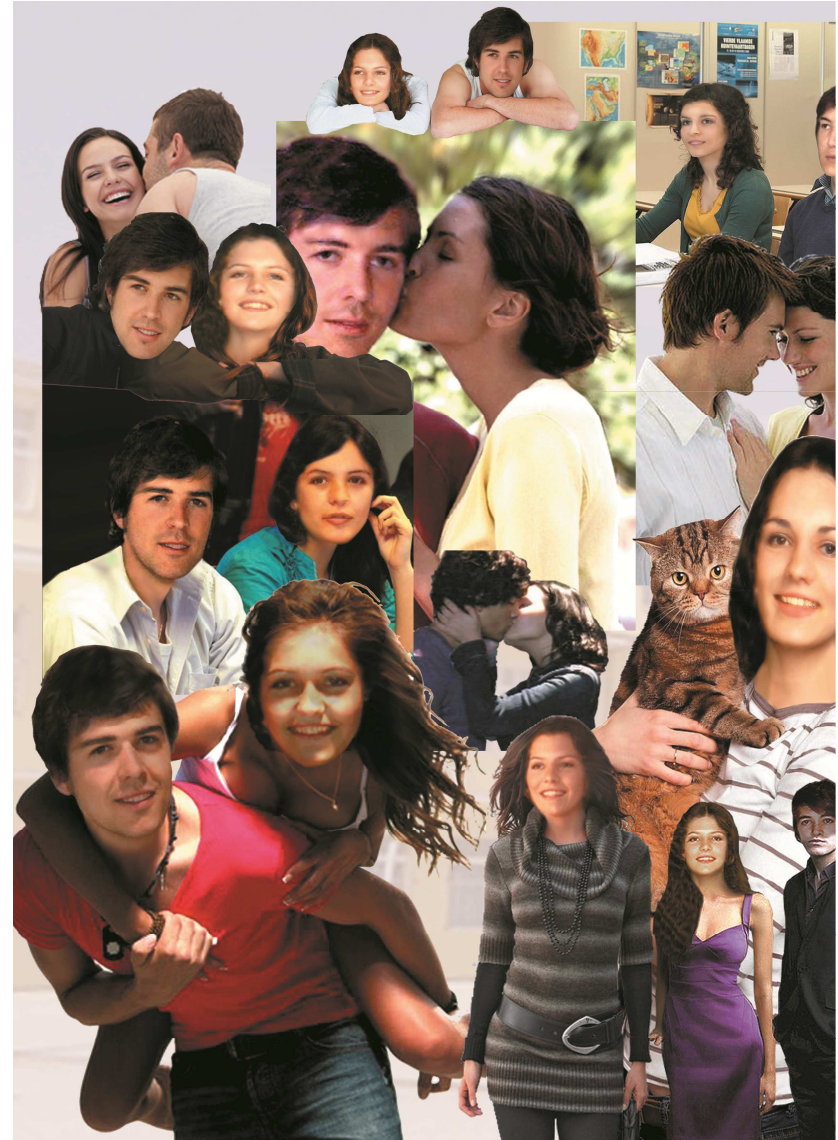
The Future



Young Love tells about the experiences that awoke and changed him, and about how he took the lessons to heart and put them into practice by trial and error. What started with a desire to remember, ended with a story that transcended Sean's personal experience and showed how we can get past negative and dark thoughts and embrace life.

Some people read books in order to escape reality. They want to read about magic, great adventures, romances with rock stars and nobility, paranormal gifts and supernatural creatures. They won't find these in the Young Love novels. These stories go about normal young people living in an ordinary world and struggling with love, loss and growing up. Life isn't a fairy tale. It is not full of princes and werewolves. It is not a sweet everlasting romance where everything always turns out exactly the way we want it.

Sean and Katherine are ordinary people like you and me. They are authentic and real. They are not perfect, not famous, or brilliant, but they confront the ups and downs of life, learn and grow throughout the process and refuse to withdraw into themselves or to settle for less than what is possible to make the best they can of their life. And That is what makes these stories so very beautiful!

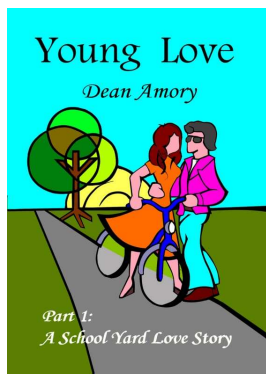


ROMANCE NOVEL REVIEW:

YOUNG LOVE – DEAN AMORY

YOUNG LOVE: THE STORY OF A BOY MOVING TOWARD ADULthood

Dean Amory's endearing romance novels "A Schoolyard Love Story" and "First Love's Shadow" about a working class boy's transition to adulthood, deliver a lovingly personal observation of an adolescent at a crossroads and effortlessly capture the shape of a life poised between childhood and adult life.



With Dean Amory following his hero, Sean, through the two last years of high school and the ensuing transition to labour and engagement, the Young Love stories transform one teenager's particular story into a moving portrait of a generation. The resulting moving portrait of a teenager with bitter-sweet glimpses of a young life in transition owes little to polished TV realities or characters of cheap romance novels in which paranormal gifts, the sudden death of

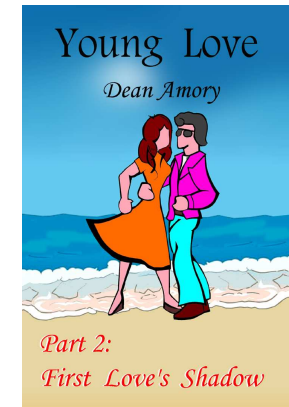
unknown rich uncles or the appearance of werewolves and zombies turns the description of teenagers' life into a mockery of reality. Instead, "Young Love" describes life as it really is and knowingly dismantles the cheery fantasies of teenage life depicted in mainstream entertainment.

We learn a great deal about Sean while we accompany him as he attends school, hangs out with friends or wanders around town on his own, works during summer holidays, etc...

The story records the rhythms of the young man's life and lets the drama grow from within his everyday experiences and thoughts.

At 17, Sean, is struggling to exchange a carefree but outgrown and unsatisfactory past by a simultaneously desired and feared unknown future. With the world seemingly closing and opening - and closing again - at the same time, and each new month bringing new decisions that have the potential to change the course of his entire life, he is living moments that are simultaneously universal and achingly personal.

Sean has arrived at that time in one's life where everything moves and slides and slips, where actions suddenly have consequences and where he starts to become who he'll be and knows he has an impact on the outcome. Everything is changing. He has finally reached the age at which he can explore and enjoy his freedom, but already he's mentally focused on how it will be to be married.



Young Love is a compassionate portrait of a working class boy perching over the border of his youth. He knows that, after graduating from high school, his life will change forever. There is a vast future in front of him, but it's one that is much more frightening than it is promising.

Although very much rooted in the seventies and in the culture of Flemish working class kids and the unique situation of this boy, the story hits notes of our universal struggle with change and uncertainty. In that way, the story is one that will melt your heart.

Dean's stories paint an indelibly pure portrayal of contemporary young love that has this wonderful capacity of turning us into a teen again, making us understand the teen mindset and how it is to constantly grapple with the duality of wanting to cling to safe ground even while setting sail filled with dreams of unknown horizons and hopes for a bright future.

In many ways, Sean's story is our story. The specifics are different, but we all go through that period of anticipation and anxiety when it comes to the future. What's ahead? He has no idea, and neither did we.

Dean Amory's greatest strengths come with his ability to capture the genuine rhythms of Sean's life. He gets past the typical narcissism of adolescence and, penetrating the facades and clichés, takes us back into its essence, revealing us the appropriate ambivalence with which Sean wrestles and plays with the friction between childhood escapist dreams and the looming responsibilities of adult life, and showing us the basic sadness that one experiences when losing innocence for ever and being dragged into adulthood.

Without belaboring any point or entrapping his subjects, Dean Amory suggests Sean's social options as recombinations of TV room, mall, bars and discotheques, friends' places and public school, painting a quiet tragedy, throughout which the native feeling of that's-just-the-way-it-is lethargy is rather convincing, with Sean's life foremost representing a tenderly wrought and free-floating treatment of adolescent angst and the story offering us a realistic yet somewhat hazy portrait of the pivotal transitional moment in life that adolescence is.



The future, in many ways, is set in Sean's mind. He has accepted that he has no valuable alternative for the mediocre plans his parents have set out for him and knows that the end of high school for him will also be the start of professional life. Yet, he hasn't yet accepted the fact that he accepted, and therefore lives on the verge of two shores, in a mental nowhere land where his dreams are crushed and disintegrate and his heart and soul are filled with pangs of disillusion, angst and bewilderment as he encounters the irrevocable onslaught of young adulthood with its new expectations and endless responsibilities, which come way too sudden and too soon.

His only real goal left is to find a girl who's willing to walk that road together with him. The problem is that at seventeen, the girls

that he wants, even while at time professing undying love and devotion for him, all still have other, more pressing dreams to pursue.

